



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Virginia Employment Commission

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The Virginia unemployment rate fell to 5.2 percent in February while total nonfarm payroll employment decreased by 3,700

—Changes in these measures since April 2020 primarily reflect the effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and efforts to contain it. —

RICHMOND— Virginia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell 0.1 of a percentage point in February to 5.2 percent, which is 2.7 percentage points above the rate from a year ago. According to household survey data in February, the labor force decreased by 15,995 to 4,238,057, as the number of unemployed residents decreased by 7,187. The number of employed residents fell by 8,808 to 4,018,030. Virginia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate continues to be below the national rate, which decreased to 6.2 percent.

Virginia nonagricultural wage and salary employment, from the monthly establishment survey, fell by 3,700 jobs in February to 3,893,700. January's preliminary estimate was revised upward by 2,200, adding to that month's job gain. In February, private sector employment decreased by 100 jobs to 3,192,200, while public sector payrolls decreased by 3,600 jobs to 701,500.

Employment rose in three of eleven major industry sectors and declined in eight. The largest job gain during February occurred in **education and health services** with an increase of 4,200 jobs to 535,000. The second largest increase occurred in **trade and transportation** (+2,300 jobs) to 657,600. **Mining and logging** gained 100 jobs, rising to 6,900 in February. The largest job loss during February occurred in **government** with a decrease of 3,600 jobs to 701,500. The decrease occurred in state government (-3,200 jobs), and local government (-800 jobs) while federal government added 400 jobs.

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The second largest decrease occurred in **leisure and hospitality** (-2,600 jobs) to 335,100. **Professional and business services** employment fell by 1,300 jobs to 765,500 while **information** lost 1,200 jobs to 64,000 over the month. Other decreases included **construction** (-600 jobs) to 206,900, **finance** (-500 jobs) to 207,200, **manufacturing** (-300 jobs) to 234,700, and **other services** (-200 jobs) to 179,300.

Nonfarm Employment in Virginia* Seasonally Adjusted

Industry	Employment			January 2021 to February 2021		February 2020 to February 2021	
	February 2021	January 2021	February 2020	Change	% Change	Change	% Change
Total Nonfarm	3,893,700	3,897,400	4,091,000	-3,700	-0.1%	-197,300	-4.8%
Total Private Sector	3,192,200	3,192,300	3,353,800	-100	0.0%	-161,600	-4.8%
<i>Goods-Producing</i>	448,500	449,300	458,900	-800	-0.2%	-10,400	-2.3%
Mining	6,900	6,800	7,600	100	1.5%	-700	-9.2%
Construction	206,900	207,500	207,800	-600	-0.3%	-900	-0.4%
Manufacturing	234,700	235,000	243,500	-300	-0.1%	-8,800	-3.6%
<i>Service-Providing</i>	3,445,200	3,448,100	3,632,100	-2,900	-0.1%	-186,900	-5.1%
Private Service-Providing	2,743,700	2,743,000	2,894,900	700	0.0%	-151,200	-5.2%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	657,600	655,300	659,900	2,300	0.4%	-2,300	-0.3%
Information	64,000	65,200	68,500	-1,200	-1.8%	-4,500	-6.6%
Finance	207,200	207,700	214,300	-500	-0.2%	-7,100	-3.3%
Professional and Business Services	765,500	766,800	776,400	-1,300	-0.2%	-10,900	-1.4%
Education and Health Services	535,000	530,800	557,900	4,200	0.8%	-22,900	-4.1%
Leisure and Hospitality Services	335,100	337,700	421,600	-2,600	-0.8%	-86,500	-20.5%
Miscellaneous Services	179,300	179,500	196,300	-200	-0.1%	-17,000	-8.7%
Government	701,500	705,100	737,200	-3,600	-0.5%	-35,700	-4.8%
Federal Government	186,600	186,200	184,900	400	0.2%	1,700	0.9%
State Government	154,700	157,900	163,100	-3,200	-2.0%	-8,400	-5.2%
Local Government	360,200	361,000	389,200	-800	-0.2%	-29,000	-7.5%

*Current month's estimates are preliminary.

From February 2020 to February 2021, the VEC estimates that establishments in Virginia lost 197,300 jobs, a decrease of 4.8%. In February, the private sector recorded an over-the-year loss of 161,600 jobs, while employment in the public sector lost 35,700 jobs.

Compared to a year ago, on a **seasonally adjusted** basis, all eleven major industry divisions experienced employment decreases. The largest over-the-year job loss occurred in **leisure and hospitality**, down 86,500 jobs (-20.5%). The next largest over-the-year job loss occurred in **government**, down 35,700 jobs (-4.8%). Within government, there were decreases in local government employment (-29,000 jobs) and state government employment (-8,400 jobs). Federal government experienced an increase

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in employment (+1,700 jobs). **Education and health services** experienced the third largest over-the-year job loss of 22,900 jobs (-4.1%). **Other services** employment declined by 17,000 jobs (-8.7%). **professional and business services** lost 10,900 jobs (-1.4%) while **manufacturing** shed 8,800 jobs (-3.6%). Other losses were in **finance**, down 7,100 jobs (-3.3%); **information**, down 4,500 jobs (-6.6%); **trade and transportation**, down 2,300 jobs (-0.3%); **construction** down 900 jobs (-0.4%); and **mining** down 700 jobs (-9.2%).

Total Nonfarm Employment in Virginia* Seasonally Adjusted

Area	Employment			January 2021 to February 2021		February 2020 to February 2021	
	February 2021	January 2021	February 2020	Change	% Change	Change	% Change
Virginia	3,893,700	3,897,400	4,091,000	-3,700	-0.1%	-197,300	-4.8%
Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Radford MSA	75,600	76,500	78,300	-900	-1.2%	-2,700	-3.4%
Charlottesville MSA	112,200	113,500	122,500	-1,300	-1.1%	-10,300	-8.4%
Harrisonburg MSA	66,100	65,200	69,900	900	1.4%	-3,800	-5.4%
Lynchburg MSA	100,700	100,600	106,200	100	0.1%	-5,500	-5.2%
Northern Virginia MSA	1,456,500	1,457,000	1,537,000	-500	0.0%	-80,500	-5.2%
Richmond MSA	650,400	651,700	691,900	-1,300	-0.2%	-41,500	-6.0%
Roanoke MSA	156,500	156,100	163,800	400	0.3%	-7,300	-4.5%
Staunton-Waynesboro MSA	50,500	51,100	51,900	-600	-1.2%	-1,400	-2.7%
Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, Virginia/North Carolina MSA	768,600	767,000	803,800	1,600	0.2%	-35,200	-4.4%
Winchester, Virginia/West Virginia MSA	66,300	65,900	67,000	400	0.6%	-700	-1.0%

*Current month's estimates are preliminary.

Seasonally adjusted total nonfarm employment data is produced for ten metropolitan areas. In February, five metropolitan areas experienced over-the-month job gains, while five experienced losses over-the-month. The largest absolute job increase occurred in Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News (+1,600 jobs). The next largest absolute job gain occurred in Harrisonburg (+900 jobs). The third largest increase occurred in Roanoke and Winchester (+400 jobs each). Lynchburg added 100 jobs over-the-month. Charlottesville and Richmond experienced the largest absolute job losses, with each losing 1,300 jobs. Other over-the-month job losses occurred in Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Radford (-900 jobs), Staunton-Waynesboro (-600 jobs), and Northern Virginia (-500 jobs).

Over-the-year, **seasonally adjusted** total nonfarm employment decreased in all ten metropolitan areas. The Northern Virginia metropolitan area experienced the largest absolute job loss, down 80,500 jobs (-5.2%). Richmond ranked second, with a loss of 41,500 jobs (-6.0%). Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News ranked third with a decline of 35,200 jobs (-4.4%). Other over-the-year job losses occurred in Charlottesville

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(-10,300 jobs), Roanoke (-7,300 jobs), Lynchburg (-5,500 jobs), Harrisonburg (-3,800 jobs), Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Radford (-2,700 jobs), Staunton-Waynesboro (-1,400 jobs), and Winchester (-700 jobs).

NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED DATA

Virginia's **unadjusted** unemployment rate fell by 0.3 of a percentage point in February to 5.4 percent, and was up 2.9 percentage points from a year ago. Compared to a year ago, the number of unemployed increased by 116,332, household employment decreased by 349,869, and the labor force decreased by 233,537. Virginia's not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate continues to be below the national unadjusted rate, which fell by 0.2 percentage points in February to 6.6 percent.

Compared to last month, the February unadjusted workweek for Virginia's 155,600 manufacturing production workers decreased by 0.5 hours to 40.9 hours. Average hourly earnings of private-sector production workers decreased by \$.35 to \$21.18 in February and average weekly earnings fell \$25.08 to \$866.26.

Technical note: Estimates of unemployment and industry employment levels are obtained from two separate monthly surveys. Resident employment and unemployment data are mainly derived from the Virginia portion of the national Current Population Survey (CPS), a household survey conducted each month by the U.S. Census Bureau under contract with BLS, which provides input to the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program (often referred to as the "household" survey). Industry employment data is mainly derived from the Current Employment Statistics (CES) survey, a monthly survey of approximately 18,000 Virginia businesses conducted by BLS, which provides estimates of employment, hours, and earnings data broken down by industry for the nation as a whole, all states and most major metropolitan areas (often referred to as the "establishment" survey). Both industry and household estimates are revised each month based on additional information from updated survey reports compiled by the BLS. **January 2021 civilian labor force and unemployment (the "household survey") estimates for Virginia and sub-state areas were revised to incorporate updated inputs, new population controls, re-estimation of models, and other changes. Nonfarm payroll employment (the "establishment survey") estimates for Virginia and metro areas were also adjusted to 2020 benchmark levels. For more information on benchmarking and on how COVID-19 affected collection of the BLS establishment and household surveys in February, refer to the BLS [February 2021 Employment Situation](#) press release for details.**

The statistical reference week for the household survey this month was the week of February 7-13, 2021.

The Virginia Employment Commission plans to release the February local area unemployment rates on Wednesday, April 7, 2021. The data will be available on our website www.VirginiaWorks.com. The March statewide unemployment rate and employment data for both the state and metropolitan areas are scheduled to be released on Friday, April 16, 2021.